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Municipalities praised for submitting pavement rating data

The vast majority of communities across the state recently submitted pavement ratings to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to help identify existing conditions and needs for the local road network. We are pleased to see the resounding response to this new requirement. This information will be stored in the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) and, beginning in August, 2002, will allow communities to better understand road conditions throughout the state via the Internet.

"As of February 2002, WisDOT had received pavement data from 1,883 municipalities and counties representing an overall response rate of 98%."

State Statute 86.302(2) requires municipalities and counties to assess the physical condition of their local roadways and submit the information to WisDOT by December 15, 2001, and every two years thereafter. The data on local pavement conditions will serve several important functions. Locally, the data can help communities prioritize pending road projects. At the state level, the information will be used to assess the statewide condition and

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*Gene Kussart, Secretary,
Wisconsin Department
of Transportation*

Message from the WisDOT Secretary

I am honored to serve as the new Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and I look forward to working with local communities on issues affecting the 100,000 mile network of local roads. I anticipate working closely with the Local Roads and Streets Council and local communities as I take over for former Secretary Terry Mulcahy. I want to continue the successes the council has helped foster over the past six years.

I know Terry has been very proud of the strong partnership that the council has helped build, not only between local governments and WisDOT, but also between various local governments themselves. This partnership was profiled in a paper WisDOT recently authored highlighting the council's activities and achievements. I am happy

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*Rick Jones, Council Chair,
Commissioner of Public
Works, City of Racine*

Message from the Council Chair

As local public works officials, we've been challenged recently by two new pieces of legislation. On the state level, as of late 2001, we are now required to utilize a pavement evaluation system to rate our local roads. This data will then be inputted into a statewide local road database (the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads or WISLR).

And from the federal government, if you have not heard about it yet, you will shortly, is General Accounting Standards Bureau Statement No. 34 (GASB 34). GASB 34 will require local government to report on their capital assets in a manner similar to businesses. These capital assets include roads, bridges, tunnels, dams, sewage systems, water systems, etc.

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Council Chair Message

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The requirement for Phase I communities, those with annual revenues of \$100 million or more, was to report this information by June 15, 2001. Phase II communities with revenues between \$10 million and \$100 million must report by June 15, 2002, while Phase III communities with revenues less than \$10 million begin reporting by June of 2003. Public works officials will be vitally important in providing the infrastructure data necessary to meet this new requirement.

Although there are several reasons for these new requirements, a central theme is accountability. In today's world, it is not enough for the public to know what we are spending their money on, they also want to be assured that the money is being spent wisely. The financial community is no longer satisfied to know just what we are borrowing the money for, they also want to be assured that each community recognizes the value of its infrastructure and that its maintenance and replacement needs are being met. Even various groups within the transportation community are inquiring as to the value received from the state and federal transportation dollars which go to local governments. And as we ask for additional funds to meet our growing needs, the question becomes whether the additional dollars will actually result in an improved transportation system.

How should we respond to these new requirements and demands for accountability? In my opinion, we should not only eagerly embrace them, we should extend asset management techniques such as pavement management to all of our major infrastructure components. The reasons are quite apparent.

"In today's world, it is not enough for the public to know what we are spending their money on, they also want to be assured that the money is being spent wisely."

First of all, while many of us are already utilizing various asset management systems to guide our decision making, for many others it will significantly raise the bar as to how our infrastructure is managed.

Secondly, these various systems allow for improved decision making. Each of us has infrastructure needs for which there may be insufficient funding. The various asset management programs allow you to determine how to best allocate these scarce resources. In addition, although political decisions will always be a valuable part of our governmental process, asset management provides the information necessary to make informed decisions. Policy makers provided with good information will usually make the right choices.

Finally, not only should all of us embrace asset management techniques such as pavement management, we should also educate the public that these management tools provide sound principals in our decision making process. This information should help improve the confidence and trust of citizens that the best public investment decisions are being made. The value of establishing this trust with our various stakeholders far exceeds the cost to implement such programs.



WISLR launch set for mid-2002

The official launch of the computer database that will contain comprehensive information on Wisconsin's local road network has been delayed until mid-2002. Due to the magnitude of the statewide data being converted and utilization of new technology, the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) database is not expected to be launched until August 2002. Once available, people will have the ability to view the entire WISLR database and will be able to edit data for their own jurisdiction via the Internet. Rudimentary pavement analysis will also be available through WISLR in August 2002. The analysis tool will provide summaries of pavement condition by community, region, and functional classification. Be on the look out for notices announcing WISLR training sessions in the fall of 2002.

Two new Paser manuals available

The UW-Transportation Information Center recently developed pavement evaluation systems for unimproved (dirt) roads and brick/block pavements. You can order the recently released Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating System (Paser) manuals, and other manuals on concrete, asphalt, seal-coat and gravel surfaces, by contacting the UW-TIC at 800.442.4615.

Paserware Software update

The next upgrade to Paserware Software is scheduled to be launched in the late fall of 2002. Paserware is the software that supports use of the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) system for local roads. Version 2.9 of Paserware will replace Version 2.5 that was launched in July 2001. The new version will fully support the "On/At" geographic referencing method employed by the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR). Web-based training sessions on Version 2.9 will be offered by the UW-Transportation Information Center in the late fall of 2002. For more information, contact Steve Pudloski, UW-TIC at 608.262.8707.



Secretary Message

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to report that the paper was presented in January at the annual conference of the Transportation Research Board in Washington, D.C. to very favorable reviews. Not only WisDOT, but now transportation professionals around the United States view the Local Roads and Streets Council as a model for coordination and communication.

Many members of the council, along with representatives of other public and private sector interests, continued this open line of communication during WisDOT's "stakeholders" event held in December. The conference was convened to stimulate conversation about emerging transportation needs as we look towards reauthorization of the federal transportation bill and as WisDOT updates the Long Range Transportation Plan. I am committed to listening to your input and concerns to enhance the local road network across Wisconsin. It will be especially timely during the reauthorization and long range planning processes.

"I want to continue the successes the council has helped foster over the past six years."

I also want to thank the communities in Wisconsin for their outstanding response to the new requirement to generate and submit pavement condition data to WisDOT. I am happy to report that almost all counties and municipalities complied with the statutory requirement. This information is crucial as we begin to develop a Local Road Element as part of our Long Range Transportation Plan. The data will provide a baseline understanding of local road needs in the state. This data, coupled with the launch of the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads, positions us as national leaders in local road information and makes us the envy of transportation professionals across the United States.



Calendar of events

Local Roads and Streets Council meetings are held every other month in the City Council Chambers in Wisconsin Rapids beginning at 10 a.m. The meeting schedule for the remainder of 2002 is:

May 1, July 10, September 4, and November 6.

Please contact Brian Zirbes, WisDOT, at 608.264.8426 or at brian.zirbes@dot.wi.state.us to confirm meeting dates and times.

April 11, 2002: Educational Teleconference Network Series on Liability and Legal Issues relating to road, sidewalk and bridge maintenance. For registration information, please contact the UW-Extension Local Government Center at 608.262.9960.

Municipalities praised

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needs of the 100,000-mile local road network, and will assist in updating WisDOT's Long Range Transportation Plan. Analysis of the pavement rating data will also be helpful in the state's biennial budget deliberations.

As of February 2002, WisDOT had received pavement data from 1,883 municipalities and counties representing an overall response rate of 98%. Data has been received from all cities and counties in the state. The response rate for towns is 98% while 96% of villages have provided pavement ratings to the department. WisDOT is following up with the other 22 towns and 17 villages to obtain their roadway data. Pavement information is required not only in response to the state law, but also to better reflect actual conditions and needs.

Going electronic



The Spring 2002 issue of this news letter marks a transition in the way you will be receiving news from the

Local Roads and Streets Council. This issue is being sent out via e-mail to the addresses we have on file. The shift to the automated version of the newsletter will cut down on production time and help us deliver news to you in a quicker fashion. This change will also help us reduce printing and postage costs. Over time, the newsletter will also be available through the WisDOT Web site. Please contact lisc@dot.wi.state.us to add e-mail addresses to the newsletter distribution list.

For questions about the LRSC, please contact:

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